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IN REPLY REFER TO:

## United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

MIDWEST REGION

1709 JACKSON STREET

OMAHA, NEBRASKA 68102-2571

L48(MWR-PC/C)

APR 26 2001

### Memorandum

To: Director, WASO (0001)  
From: Regional Director, Midwest Region  
Subject: Wilderness Suitability Assessment for Apostle Islands National Lakeshore

The attached memorandum from the Superintendent, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, proposes that evaluations completed in association with the park's 1989 general management plan be accepted as meeting the requirements for a wilderness suitability assessment as required by section 6.2.1 of National Park Service Management Policies. I agree with the proposal, and recommend that you approve the determination of the identified land as suitable for designation as wilderness.

As you may recall, Senator Russ Feingold added language to the fiscal year 2001 Department of Interior Appropriations Conference Report that earmarked \$200,000 for a formal wilderness study at Apostle Islands. We intend to initiate that study this summer. However, we believe it is important to complete the wilderness suitability assessment process as outlined in Management Policies before proceeding.

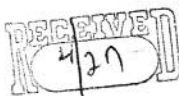
If you concur with our approach, and agree with our determination of suitability, please indicate by signing below. If you have questions about this matter please contact me or Michael Madell, Regional Environmental Coordinator, at 608-441-5600.

Attachments

CONCURRED AND APPROVED

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Director, National Park Service

04/27/01  
Date





IN REPLY REFER TO:

## United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
Apostle Islands National Lakeshore  
Route 1, Box 4  
Bayfield, Wisconsin 54814-9599

April 25, 2001

L48

### Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Midwest Region

From: Superintendent, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore

Subject: Wilderness Suitability Assessment for Apostle Islands National Lakeshore

National Park Service (NPS) Management Policies (2001) require that a "wilderness suitability assessment" be performed prior to initiating a wilderness suitability study for an area. In initiating the park's Wilderness Suitability Study, questions were raised regarding whether that step has already been taken here.

In our professional judgement, we believe that it has. Regional Environmental Coordinator Michael Madell, and NPS Wilderness Program Manager Wes Henry have concurred. The park's 1989 General Management Plan contains a section titled "Wilderness Suitability," which met all of the requirements of NPS Management Policies (1988). It both quantified and delineated lands that park management believed to be suitable for further study as wilderness, and did it as part of a public process. A copy is enclosed for your review. This assessment stated that about 97% of the park's land base had wilderness potential. Given that extremely high percentage, and given that the park has been managing those lands as wilderness with little or no controversy for the past 12 years, we believe that the document's age is not an issue. The conclusions of the assessment are still current today – about 97% of the park's land base remains eligible for further study.

This assessment meets all of the requirements of the Wilderness Act, as well as all of the NPS policies in effect at that time. However, the 2001 Management Policies require approval of the assessment by the Director. We believe that in the interest of completeness, it would be best to seek that approval, thereby meeting all of the current requirements of a wilderness suitability assessment.

Our overriding concern at this point is to be able to hold scoping sessions in the local area this summer. Due to the seasonal nature of both the local and visiting populations here, we believe that summer scoping sessions are critical. If we are not able to wrap up the assessment soon, we risk

losing that opportunity. The only reasonable alternative we will have if that happens is to delay the study for an additional year.

We appreciate your consideration of this matter. If you have any questions about our wilderness suitability assessment, or any other aspect of the wilderness suitability study, please contact either Management Assistant Jim Nepstad at 715-779-3398 extension 102, or me at 779-3398 extension 101.

John D. Neal



# United States Department of the Interior

## FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Green Bay ES Field Office  
1015 Challenger Court  
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November 21, 2002

APOLIS ISLANDS	Info	Action	Initials
Superintendent	/	/	LS
Mgmt Assistant	/	/	JS
Admin Officer	/	/	JS
Chief Res Mgmt	/	/	JS
Chief Res Ed	/	/	JS
Chief Maint	/	/	JS
Julie			

RECEIVED  
APOSTLE ISLANDS NL  
NOV 25 2002

### Memorandum

**To:** Superintendent, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, National park Service,  
Bayfield, WI

**From:** Field Supervisor, ES Field Office, Fish and Wildlife Service,  
Green Bay, WI

**Subject:** Apostle Islands National Lakeshore Wilderness Suitability Study/Environmental  
Impact Statement, Ashland and Bayfield Counties, Wisconsin

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has reviewed the referenced project. We offer the following comments relative to potential impacts of the proposal on endangered species.

### Federally-Listed Threatened and Endangered Species and Critical Habitat

A review of information in our files indicates that the following federally-listed threatened or endangered species or critical habitat occur in Ashland and Bayfield Counties.

#### Ashland County

<u>Classification</u>	<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Habitat</u>
threatened	bald eagle	<u>Haliaeetus</u> <u>leucocephalus</u>	breeding
endangered	gray wolf	<u>Canis lupus</u>	northern and central forested areas
threatened	Canada lynx	<u>Lynx Canadensis</u>	potential habitat
endangered	piping plover	<u>Charadrius</u> <u>melodus</u>	sandy beaches; bare alluvial and dredge spoil islands



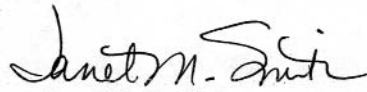
critical habitat	piping plover	<u>Charadrius</u> <u>melodus</u>	sandy beaches that possess all or most of the primary constituent elements
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**Bayfield County**

<u>Classification</u>	<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Habitat</u>
threatened	bald eagle	<u>Haliaeetus</u> <u>leucocephalus</u>	breeding
endangered	gray wolf	<u>Canis lupus</u>	northern and central forested areas
threatened	Canada lynx	<u>Lynx canadensis</u>	potential habitat
threatened	Fassett's locoweed	<u>Oxytropis</u> <u>campestris</u> <u>var. chartacea</u>	open sandy lakeshores

Due to the nature and location of the proposed activities, we conclude that listed species or critical habitat will not be affected. This precludes the need for further action on this project as required by the 1973 Endangered Species Act, as amended. Should the project be modified or new information become available that indicates listed species or critical habitat may be affected, consultation should be initiated.

We appreciate the opportunity to respond. Questions pertaining to these comments can be directed to Mr. Ronald Spry by calling 920-465-7420.

  
 Janet M. Smith

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## GLOSSARY

**Barrier spit** – Elongate sand ridges that extend generally parallel to the coast.

**Cultural landscape** – A geographic area, including both cultural and natural resources and the wildlife or domestic animals therein, associated with a historic event, activity, or person, or exhibiting other cultural or esthetic values. There are four nonmutually exclusive types of cultural landscapes: historic sites, historic designed landscapes, historic vernacular landscapes, and ethnographic landscapes.

**Cusate forelands** – A type of sand spit that is wider than it is long.

***De facto* wilderness** – An area that is managed as if it were wilderness, but which has not been officially designated and included in the national wilderness preservation system. Under *NPS Management Policies*, the National Park Service manages lands that have found to be suitable for wilderness, but have not yet studied or actions have not been taken on a wilderness proposal or recommendation, as *de facto* wilderness.

**Environmental impact statement** – As required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), a detailed document that is prepared when a proposed action or alternatives have the potential for significant impact on the human environment.

**Environmentally preferred alternative** – Of the action alternatives analyzed, the one that would best promote the policies in §101 of the National Environmental Policy Act.

**Ethnographic resource** – Objects and places, including sites, structures, landscapes, and natural resources, with traditional cultural meaning and value to associated peoples. Research and consultation with associated people identifies and explains the places and things they find culturally meaningful. Ethnographic resources eligible for the National Register of Historic Places are called traditional cultural properties.

**General management plan (GMP)** – A plan that clearly defines direction for resource preservation and visitor use in a park, and serves as the basic foundation for decision making.

**Impairment** – An impact so severe that, in the professional judgment of a responsible NPS manager, it would harm the integrity of park resources or values and violate the 1916 NPS Organic Act.

**Interpretive media** – This term is basically the same as nonpersonal interpretive services. Examples of these media include: includes park brochures and other publications, museum and visitor center exhibits, wayside exhibits, web pages, audiovisual programs, and radio information systems.

**Life estate** – Structures and land leased back to the original owner for the lifetime of that owner. The park's enabling legislation authorized the government to offer life estates to the prior owners at the time their land was acquired.

**Lightscape** – The state of natural resources and values as they exist in the absence of human-caused light. This is usually associated with natural darkness and night skies.

**Minimum requirement concept** – A two-step process that documents 1) the determination as to whether or not a proposed management action is appropriate or necessary for the administration of the area as wilderness, and does not pose a significant impact to the wilderness resources and character; and 2) the selection of the management method (tool) that causes the least amount of impact to the physical resources and experiential qualities (character) of wilderness.

**Nonpersonal interpretive services** – Non-personal interpretive services are those that do not require the presence of staff. Examples of these services include wayside exhibits, visitor center exhibits, radio information systems, and computer technologies.

**Nonwilderness area** – An area that does not meet wilderness suitability criteria, or other lands that may satisfy the criteria but for other reasons are not included in a wilderness proposal. These areas may vary between alternatives in a wilderness study / environmental impact statement.

**High-water mark** – In the case of Lake Superior, the highest level reached by the lake's water. Typically, this corresponds to a surface elevation of about 602 feet in the Apostle Islands, and often corresponds to stable vegetation lines adjacent to beaches.

**Personal interpretive services** – Personal interpretive services are those in which staff interact with visitors. Examples of these services include ranger talks, staffed visitor centers, and other ranger-conducted activities.

**Potential wilderness** – Lands that possess wilderness characteristics that would normally qualify them for designation with


the national wilderness preservation system but contain temporary non-conforming conditions (such as structures or roads) or uses (such as inholdings or valid mining claims) that prevent their being immediately designated as wilderness. Potential wilderness may be identified in NPS wilderness proposals, wilderness recommendations, and within legislation designating other portions of a park as wilderness.

**Proposed wilderness** – A suitable wilderness area that has been studied by the National Park Service and has been submitted as a proposal to the director but has not been approved by the Department of the Interior.

**Recommended wilderness** – A suitable wilderness area that has been studied and proposed by the National Park Service, recommended for wilderness by the Secretary of the Interior to the President, and then transmitted by the President to Congress. Once approved by the Secretary, the area can be considered recommended wilderness for management purposes.

**Record of Decision** – A document that is prepared to substantiate a decision based on an environmental impact statement.

**Sandscape** – A landscape that is dominated by sand. In the Apostle Islands that are various sandscapes, including sandspits, cusped forelands, tombolos, numerous beaches, and a barrier spit.

**Scoping** – The process followed in preparing a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document for determining the scope of issues to be addressed and for identifying the significant issues related to a proposed action.  Internal scoping is when NPS staff



decide what needs to be analyzed in a NEPA document. External scoping is early public involvement in a NEPA process, intended to identify what issues and concerns the public has regarding a proposed action.

**Soundscape** – The natural soundscape is the aggregate of all the natural sounds that occur in an area, together with the physical capacity for transmitting natural sounds. Natural soundscapes exist in the absence of human-caused sound.

**Suitable wilderness** – An area that possesses the qualities and character, as identified within the Wilderness Act, which would qualify it for designation within the national wilderness preservation system. An area where, based upon a wilderness suitability assessment, the NPS Director has approved the determination of suitability for wilderness designation.

**Tombolo** – A sand feature that joins either two islands or an island to the mainland.

**Use and occupancy agreement** – Structures and land leased back to the original owner for a finite period of time. The park's enabling legislation authorized

the government to offer use and occupancy agreements to the prior owners at the time their land was acquired.

**Visitor nonwilderness experiences** – The experiences a visitor has in those parts of the park that are not included in a wilderness proposal. This includes interactions with natural and cultural resources, park staff, and park facilities (e.g., campgrounds, trails) that visitors use. Examples of activities that generate these visitor experiences include using a visitor center or wayside exhibit, walking on a self-guided interpretive trail, socializing at a picnic area or group campsite, or watching a ranger presentation at an amphitheater.

**Wilderness suitability assessment** – A brief memorandum, from a regional director to the Director, that makes a management determination as to the suitability of a park's lands for wilderness designation. All lands and waters found to possess the characteristics and values of wilderness, as defined in the Wilderness Act, and determined suitable pursuant to the wilderness suitability assessment are formally studied to develop a proposal for wilderness designation.

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